

CLAIMS

1. A method for increasing immune competence of an animal comprising inducing calcitriol synthesis by said animal.
- 5 2. A method according to claim 1 comprising feeding said animal a food capable of inducing calcitriol synthesis.
3. A method according to claim 2 wherein said food is supplemented or enriched with a substance capable of inducing calcitriol synthesis.
- 10 4. A method according to claim 3 wherein said substance comprises a phyto-estrogen.
5. A method according to claim 3 or 4 wherein said substance is derived from a leguminous seed.
6. A method according to claim 5 wherein said seed is soy.
- 15 7. A method according to anyone of foregoing claims whereby also phytate degradation capacity of said animal is increased.
8. A method for preparing an animal food suitable for increasing immune competence and/or phytate degradation capacity of said animal comprising supplementing or enriching
- 20 said food with a substance capable of inducing calcitriol synthesis.
9. A method according to claim 8 wherein said substance comprises a phyto-estrogen.
10. A method according to claim 9 wherein said substance is
- 25 derived from a leguminous seed.
11. A method according to claim 10 wherein said seed is soy.
12. Use of a dietary substance capable of inducing calcitriol synthesis for the preparation of a supplement for an animal food suitable for increasing immune competence and/or phytate
- 30 degradation capacity of said animal.
13. A supplement for an animal food suitable for increasing immune competence and/or phytate degradation capacity of said animal comprising a substance capable of inducing calcitriol synthesis.

14. A supplement according to claim 13 wherein said substance comprises a phyto-estrogen.
15. An animal food comprising a supplement according to claim 13 or 14.
- 5 16. An animal food enriched for a substance capable of inducing calcitriol synthesis.
17. A food according to claim 15 or 16 for poultry or pigs.
18. A method for increasing immune competence and/or phytate degradation of an animal comprising feeding said animal a food
- 10 according to anyone of claims 16 to 18.
19. Use of a method according to claim 18 for reducing or abolishing dietary antibiotic intake by a food animal.
20. An animal fed a food according to anyone of claims 15 to 18.
- 15 21. A product derived from an animal according to claim 20.